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# What American Neutrality Should Mean

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## *A PROTEST*

BY

RICHARD S. RAUH
PITTSBURGH, PA.

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Pittsburgh, Pa.

Dedicated

to

Neutral America

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# What American Neutrality Should Mean

An Answer to Charles H. Joseph

**BY RICHARD S. RAUH**

Director of Academy of Science and Art Dramatic Section; Treasurer of Drama League of America, Pittsburgh Section; President of the Philo-Dramatists; Associate Editor of the Criterion; Editor of the "Bulletin," Pittsburgh Association of Credit Men.

## A PROEM

With satisfactory cause or without sufficient justification, the fact nevertheless remains that the majority of the American people, the greater part of the American press and the stronger proportion of the American body politic have been waging a relentless campaign, directly or indirectly against Germany and her allies since the inception of the War of 1914. For the first time in many generations the doctrine of "the Square Deal," always characteristic of the citizens of the United States in their history, has been tested and protested. In the vaunted crucible of civilization the people of this nation have been tried, but the proud development of their spirit of fairness, of impartiality, of neutrality at last has been challenged!

Public sentiment in America has been overwhelmingly favorable to the Triple Entente since the opening of hostilities and while such popular feeling may have ground for existence, the most discouraging breach of good faith has been exhibited in the blind acceptance of practically all that reaches American shores through British-censored cables. When in doubt, the Teuton is strongly condemned; when guiltless he is conscientiously maligned; when guilty, he is infamously abused. On the other hand, the cause of the Allies is more fortunate, for it has won the silent as well as the enthusiastic support of the majority of a great many so-called neutral Americans.

To the student of International Law, it is a perfectly familiar fact at this date, after ten months of brutal butchery, that scores of international statutes included in the conventions, from the Declaration of Paris in 1856, to the Declaration of London in 1909,



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not forgetting the First and Second Hague Peace Conferences,—have been flagrantly violated by BOTH contending factions. The truly neutral American should therefore be prepared to condemn both parties for their infractions and infringements of International Law, but it is disgracefully obvious that only Germany has been generally accused without trial in the court of a prejudiced public opinion.

Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States, in his superb Proclamation of American Neutrality to the people of America, on August fourth, stated that among other violations of neutrality the FIRST act which was "forbidden to be done" was "Accepting and exercising a commission to serve EITHER of the said belligerents by land or sea against the other belligerent." He was careful not to say that they were privileged to assist BOTH belligerents. But despite this early admonition, his citizens have refused to be guided by his lofty concept of international morality, until it is now known that over one hundred million dollars worth of war material has already been shipped to the fighting forces of the Allies from the only great neutral (?) nation of the world!

In his definition of neutrality as it applies to International Law, L. Oppenheim* states that it is "the attitude of impartiality adopted by third States towards belligerents and recognized by belligerents, such attitude creating RIGHTS and DUTIES between the impartial States and the belligerents." And he continues by saying that "Neutrality as an attitude of impartiality involves the DUTY of ABSTAINING from assisting EITHER belligerent either actively or passively." It is here noted that this renowned authority is watchful not to include the thought that it involves the duty of ASSISTING BOTH belligerents.

*International Law, Vol. II, pages 361 and 365.

With scarcely a conflicting precedent, the head of a neutral government in time of war, has always cautioned its citizens to endeavor to refrain from being a party to the bloody conflict on either or both sides, and has promised no protection to the transgressor of the edict. President Washington on April 22, 1793, held "that whosoever of the citizens of the United States shall render himself liable to punishment or forfeiture under the law of nations by committing, aiding or abetting hostilities against any of the said powers, or by carrying to any of them those articles which are deemed contraband by the modern usage of nations, will not receive the protection of the United States against such punishment or forfeiture." On August 22, 1870, President Grant made the identical proclamation.

By demanding from Germany an explanation of the sinking or partial destruction of his own neutral ships carrying contraband of war, an interesting international question is consequently suggested by President Wilson. For if private citizens' ships carrying contraband of war are to be protected by the American government, the United States could well be declared unneutral, since it is held by J. B. Moore** that the supply of materials of war "constitutes on the part of the individuals who engage in it a participation in hostilities and as such is confessedly an unneutral act. The private citizen undertakes the business at his own risk and against this risk his government cannot assure him protection WITHOUT MAKING ITSELF A PARTY TO HIS UNNEUTRAL ACT." Mr. Wilson must now decide to prohibit sending war munitions abroad and thereby declare himself a sincere neutral or admit that the belligerents are entitled to deal with his contraband-laden ships according to international practice and admit himself technically neutral.

**Digest of International Law, Vol. VII, pages 748 and 749.

The people of this nation should know that the prohibition of the criminal exportation of American arms and ammunition will insure true American neutrality and a more speedy termination of the European carnage. It is therefore in the hands of this government OF true Americans, FOR true Americans and BY true Americans that the prolongation or cessation of hostilities resides.

Pittsburgh, Pa., May 30, 1915.

R. S. R

## BEGINNING OF THE END*

We feel that the destruction of the Lusitania with hundreds of men, women and children may have a tendency to bring the war-mad countries of Europe to a realization of the truth that they have slipped back to the ages when men were nothing more nor less than mere animals, the strongest being the mightiest. But one will thumb the pages of history in vain either in pagan or Christian lands to find more cruelty and hellishness than have been evidenced during this contest between "civilized" nations in the twentieth century.

The best thought of Germany surely cannot approve of the murder of hundreds of innocent women and babies, unless their moral nature has been entirely perverted and we scarcely believe this. That England is to blame in a great degree for creating conditions that made possible this wholesale slaughter cannot be denied, but that does not lessen in the slightest degree the fact that Germany completely turned her back on every rule of civilized warfare (which in reality is a contradiction in terms, because war and civilization have nothing in common) and leaped back to the days of primitive man, when she sent unwarned and unarmed men, women and children to an untimely grave.

This act has produced such a feeling of horror throughout the world and has engendered such a complete revulsion of feeling toward not alone Germany, but England as well, that we believe as a result

*(An editorial published in The Criterion following the sinking of the Lusitania, and written by the Editor, Charles H. Joseph, which prompted the answer and article which follows.)

of the negotiations about to begin between this country and Germany, peace may be more rapidly advanced than seemed possible a few days ago.

It is pertinent to observe at this juncture that in answer to the Pro-German spokesmen who uphold the Lusitania horror on the ground that England brought it on herself and that the Americans who went on board did so at their peril, we would suggest that they ask themselves if the American nation, which makes no such swashbuckling claim to Kultur as does Germany, would be or could be guilty of such an inhumane act. Think it over without prejudice and try to picture public opinion in this government commending such a tragedy. The longer this war continues the more it becomes evident that this country's sense of righteousness is more highly developed than that of the older nations. Even during the Civil War, General Lee took the position that attacks should be made ONLY ON SOLDIERS and NOT ON CIVILIANS. When we invested Vera Cruz instead of taking the leading Mexican citizens and executing them as an "example" and to prevent sniping, burn and kill and pillage, the United States showed the way that a civilized people should act. But everything is "different" in Europe; of course everything that doesn't suit the warring nations is "different"— the situation must be dealt with "differently." There is one big difference—and if you want to know what it is read President Wilson's speech delivered last Monday night in Philadelphia.

In the meantime we shall have no war with Germany unless the Germans have reached the final stages of raving lunacy. While we haven't much of a standing army nor much of a navy, we do have lots of time to accumulate them, and our resources are inexhaustible.

## WHAT AMERICAN NEUTRALITY SHOULD MEAN

BY RICHARD S. RAUH

Your editorial, Mr. Joseph, called "Beginning of the End," which was published in last week's issue of the Criterion, was well meant; and if it was originally intended to convey the thought that the visualized horror of the sinking of the ocean greyhound, Lusitania, should prove the turning point in the war because a war-crime of one country might result in turning the introspective eyes of all nations to see the depths of depravity to which they are stooping,—you would have won the hearty support of all in your plea. But in your discussion of the "cruelty and hellishness" of the European butchery you have unfortunately laid undue emphasis upon the barbarity of the German soldiers, German leaders and German people. You have truly shown that civilization is fast slipping backward, but you have failed to convince your readers that EVERY NATION IS EQUALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS RETROGRESSION. In other words, you have singled out a particular country upon whose shoulders you place the greater part of blame and you conclude by scoring Germany for her "inhumane act."

In replying to this one-sided view of an international problem it would be well in the first place, to consider an important fact which might prove startling but nevertheless incontrovertible, I believe. History will some day show that the country which most successfully encouraged the slaughter of men, was not Germany, but AMERICA. Strange as this may first sound, still stranger will it appear when I say further that before finding fault with Germany for "completely

turning her back on civilized warfare," (as you contend), you must not blind yourself to the truth that America has defied the moral code and the civilized code of humanity by gashing an already torn wound. A NEUTRAL COUNTRY IS A NATION WHICH IN NO WAY PARTICIPATES IN A WAR BETWEEN OTHER STATES. It is NOT, as has been so often erroneously supposed, a country which is willing to assist ALL contending factions. Webster defines "neutrality" as "the state of taking no part on either side,"—and this is the construction placed upon neutrality by the CIVILIZED world and accepted in all INTERNATIONAL CODES. He is careful not to say that it is a state of taking the part of both sides. Neutrality is "indifference" (as Webster further explains the term) and it is not active encouragement, as so many English-Americans have made it.

Think honestly of the country of which you speak as having "leaped back to the days of primitive man" and then compare such a land to a nation which is openly and proudly supporting the murder of millions of husbands, fathers, brothers, sons. No argument however subtle, no logic however advanced, will be able to convince CIVILIZED man that active assistance in war even though it be indirect, is the honorable position for ANY nation, let alone a NEUTRAL nation to take. What holy hypocrisy! Think of a country like America, Mr. Joseph—your country and mine—think of its involved trickery! When President Wilson asked our country to pray for peace, some of our citizens who had heard his stirring appeal for neutrality were shipping cases of cartridges and carloads of shrapnel to the warring factions. For the past nine months representatives of the Belgian government have come to us to ask for our support to supply the people with food and clothing and NONE HAS

SUGGESTED THAT WE REFRAIN FROM SHIPPING AMMUNITION TO THE NATIONS AT WAR TO SHORTEN THE CARNAGE. We are continually shown the horrors of the starving non-combatants of Belgium, but who is protesting that the more munitions of war we make, the longer will such starvation continue? We try to justify our position of accepting millions of dollars from the Triple Entente for war material by paying a meager part of that money back to Belgium as a recompense for her toleration of America's prolonging hostilities. Instead of removing the cause of Belgian suffering we aggravate it and then wickedly attempt to convince the world that we want to cure the disease.

It is a perfectly familiar fact that if the United States today would refuse to send any more cannon food to Europe, Germany would be substantially benefited. It is not for us to consider who would be the winner or loser. Our position is to define the HONORABLE, the MORAL, the INTERNATIONALLY ETHICAL attitude to assume and then to practice what we know to be right. I will never be able to understand how a nation of civilized citizens can apathetically witness the continual exportation of death-dealing instruments hiding all the while behind the cloak of deceitful neutrality. So many pro-English Americans (?) have openly admitted to me that after this war is over, and in the event that another should occur, it should then be the policy of a neutral country to refrain from sending food, money or ammunition to the fighting parties, but, they conclude, "since America has already freely proposed that she would send bullets to ALL countries at war and since England has a navy strong enough to insure her securing this material, we must pursue our policy until the flag of truce on one side or the other, is raised." This, you will admit, is

a puerile argument. For if a nation is to admit its wrong and then is to sink deeper in the slough of murder with each succeeding day, it sets a tragic example to mankind. In view of these facts your position becomes all the more ludicrous when you assert that "The longer this war continues the more it becomes evident that this country's sense of righteousness is more highly developed than that of the older nations." If there is righteousness in our present attitude, my telescopic and microscopic examination of the points in the case has left me without tangible proof of it. It is not yet too late for the United States to join the ranks of all other neutral countries and refuse to assist in the slaughter. I am only afraid that President Wilson is too busy talking peace and encouraging war to alter his present course.

You say in your editorial referring to the sinking of the Lusitania, that "The best thought of Germany surely cannot approve of the murder of hundreds of innocent women and babies, unless their moral nature has been entirely perverted and we SCARCELY believe this." (The enlarged letters are mine.) Therefore there is evidently a remnant of doubt in your mind about the perversion of the German mind, but I must immediately assure you that the intelligent German people no more applaud the destruction of the great Cunard liner than the thoughtful English people cheer the wholesale murder of Jewish non-combatants in Russian Poland who are declared spies by the Russians and peremptorily flogged or burned to death whenever the Cossacks wish a little stimulating amusement.

Let us understand the situation a little more clearly. I am confident that you are quite as enthusiastic an advocate of peace as I am. I know that you will always use your virile pen to condemn any jingoism or war chatter. But acknowledging that the

nations are at war, irrespective of the men who sent them and their reasons for sending them there, we both must confess that since warfare reduces man to murderer, the revolting horrors which we hear and read of each day, are grotesque plays of a brutal game. The crimes committed on the sea or on the battlefield are the inevitable results of a system which has always been condemned but never suppressed. I feel as you do that this war should never have been,—that it is a crime against humanity. But I cannot sentimentally cry aloud each time a ghastly blow is struck by one side or the other, for I have learned to know that there never was a time when man-killing instruments were so cruelly perfected as in this advanced (?) century in which we are living. And when I confess, therefore, that I expect to hear of more vicious and atrocious iniquities being committed before the war is many days older, I am simply drawing an inevitable conclusion. Be very clear on one point however: I am not endeavoring to justify the criminal acts of any nation. I am merely emphasizing a platitudinous fact that "War is Hell."

As an American citizen, then, I condone neither side, but I flay both factions, I certainly am not willing to join either entente. But inasmuch as the "Triple Alliance" (now consisting of Germany, Austro-Hungary – – and Turkey,) has been the victim of a gross American conspiracy in which the United States has failed miserably and despicably to preserve its neutrality on the issues of the international complication, and since you, too, have given a partial version of the case, I desire to remind you of a few fundamental facts with which every American should be made familiar.

It is my frank challenge which must be refuted without equivocation, that no unbiased, free-minded individual can draw a line of demarcation between a

policy like England's bent upon the starvation and eventual extermination of the Germans and the decision of the Germans to capture all ammunition of the Allies no matter if it results in the torpedoing of English craft with terrific loss of life. I demand to know the difference between slowly starving non-combatants and killing them outright. Death in both cases results. In the former instance non-combatants are powerless to survive while in the latter case they may choose between traveling in the war zone or remaining at home. Both processes of destruction fill me with revulsion for war but I am not prepared to condemn one country and condone the crimes of the other. Allow me simply to insert the word "England" for "Germany" in one of your sentences which I have already quoted, and permit me also to interchange the word "starvation" for "murder," and then if you can convince me that the Teutons are the only barbarians, I shall not only shift from my present neutral position, but I shall become a pronounced anti-German. Your sentence would now read, "The best thought of ENGLAND surely cannot approve of the STARVATION of hundreds of innocent women and babies, unless their moral nature has been entirely perverted and we scarcely believe this." Remember, furthermore that whereas HUNDREDS of women and babies lost their lives in the sinking of the Lusitania, MILLIONS of mothers and children will be sacrificed on the altar of war if England's starvation policy is successful. Can your imagination conceive of any decision more cruel, more contemptible and more cowardly than a country's open confession of its desire to starve the non-fighting masses of its enemy? You state that "Even during the Civil War, General Lee took the position that attacks should be made ONLY ON SOLDIERS and NOT ON CIVILIANS." Be so

good as to apply this to England then, Mr. Joseph, and see if the British are not equally,—in fact, not more culpable than the Teutons. For it is England's desire to end the war by slowly starving non-combatants, whereas it is Germany's avowed purpose to capture the ammunition of the Allies and thus prevent them from fighting. Which to you is the more humane after all—ending hostilities by starving cannons or by starving innocent mothers, daughters, wives and babies? And this is not pro-German sentiment. It is actually a fair American version of the horrible European holocaust, justifying neither side but dispassionately calculating the effects of the policies of both warring countries.

Further on in your editorial, pointing to the Lusitania tragedy, you remind the German "spokesmen" to "ask themselves if the American nation, which makes no swashbuckling claim to Kultur as does Germany, would be or could be guilty of such an inhumane act." You tell them to "think it over without prejudice and try to picture public opinion in this government commending such a tragedy." I would immediately answer that in sending one torpedo into an enemy's ship loaded with explosives and ammunition and carrying Canadian troops (as has been undeniably shown), Germany was within her absolute RIGHT, but even admitting that the sinking of a vessel and the resultant loss of twelve hundred guiltless individuals is an unpardonable offense, is it not vastly more criminal for a disinterested (?) nation to be sending enough war material to slaughter hundreds of thousands of men? And so I reply to you by stating that America IS guilty of "such an inhumane act" and a more vicious and inhumane act, if you please. As to the German "spokesmen" picturing public opinion in the United States commending a disaster

like the Lusitania, these "spokesmen" need not permit their consciences to prick them unduly in the destruction of this ocean liner; for if America is so obdurately indifferent to the present exportation of artillery and artillery food she would evidently be quite as stoical in the event of her own submarine's torpedoing an enemy's ammunition-laden ship.

Finally you declare that "When we invested Vera Cruz, instead of taking the leading Mexican citizens and executing them as an 'example' and to prevent sniping, burn and kill and pillage, the United States showed the way a civilized people should act." In justice to the Germans let us hastily view their military position in the war. If Pennsylvania were Germany, New York were England, Maryland were France, and Ohio were Russia,—you would then know what it means for a smaller nation like Germany to be surrounded by a host of foes. I take it that when Germany knew at the conclusion of the first few weeks of the war, the number of enemies with whom she would be forced to contend, she realized then as never before that she was fighting for her life,—for her position on the globe. Confronted by overwhelming armies Germany fought hard and when an enemy violated an agreement either by sniping at her soldiers as they entered a conquered village or by cutting the throats of the fighters as they peacefully slept in the huts of the towns, she paid them in full for their unwarranted acts. The fact that after the burning and bombarding of a few Belgian towns for flagrant transgressions of the code of war, no more sniping or throat-cutting occurred is sufficient evidence that the Teutons' admonitions and early destruction were wise war expedients. Realizing that Germany is literally encircled by enemies, it is not difficult to understand the extreme measures she has taken.

On the other hand it is almost folly to compare the action of an immense nation like America when the navy was dispatched to rush ships to little Mexico, with a much smaller country like Germany hemmed in by foes. If the United States had been "fighting for her very existence" as Germany is to-day and if the states which I have enumerated were surrounding Pennsylvania and were our own enemies, America would stop at nothing and in all probability would be justified in burning Vera Cruz to ashes. Moreover, as the case now stands, President Wilson's policy was not as successful in Mexico as he thought it would be.

I am afraid, Mr. Joseph, that you forget, when you demand that Germany adhere to a civilized code in warfare, that you do not ask Belgium, France, England, Russia and America to pursue the same faultless conduct. Of course every country should act as morally as possible under stress of battle and I excuse none but I am not blinding myself, as an American citizen, to the other side of the question which neutral (?) America would not even have us consider. And before we leave the thought of Mexico it is indeed pertinent to quote a line of President Wilson's speech to Congress on August 27, 1913, on the Mexican situation as it relates to our discussion of neutrality. "I deem it my duty to exercise the authority conferred upon me by the law of March 14, 1912, to see to it that neither side to the struggle now going on in Mexico receive any assistance from this side of the border. I shall follow the best practice of nations in the matter of neutrality by forbidding the exportation of arms or munitions of war of any kind from the United States to any part of the Republic of Mexico—a policy suggested by several interesting precedents and certainly dictated by many manifest considerations of practical expediency." What has happened to Mr. Wilson's convictions in the present war?

As far as the cruelty of the Germans is concerned, if every barbarous act of a German soldier or officer is multiplied fifty fold it would in no way compare with the atrocities being committed by the Cossack ghouls. Read the weekly columns of the paper of which you are Editor, and it will require no further proof of mine that the pillaging and ravaging of the Russians is the vilest exhibition of any heathen people in history. I am only surprised that England, the enlightened country of which you speak, would care to ally herself with this blood-reeking nation.

The disgraceful conduct of Europe, I agree with you, has set the world back many years, but I do not concur with your assumption that it is Germany that is setting the pace. Each nation is as guilty as the other and America is a partner to the blood spilling. Therefore, I, as an American citizen, make this formal protest against President Wilson's cruel determination to prolong the carnage in which countless thousands of the brawn and brain of the contending countries are being murdered; in which millions of innocent non-combatants, Belgian and German, are being starved; in which once rich nations are being bankrupted; in which an inglorious era of history is being registered in the book of life. Woodrow Wilson, at this late date, like Macbeth, unquestionably sees the bloody dagger dangling before his eyes.

There is only this to be said: A neutral nation should be indifferent to the winner or loser of a war. Not caring which side conquers it must encourage, in no way, the prolongation of butchery. And the only activity which a neutral nation should attempt when other countries are grappling at each other's throats is a conscientious and continual struggle for peace!

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